not been for the pity and the exceeding love which Ammon and his brethren had had for them; and for this cause, they were brought down into the land of Zarahemla; and they ever had been protected by the Nephites.

But it came to pass that when they saw the danger, and the many afflictions and tribulations which the Nephites bore for them, they were moved with compassion, and were desirous to take up arms in the defence of their country. But behold, as they were about to take their weapons of war, they were overpowered by the persuasions of Helaman and his brethren, for they were about to break the oath which they had made; and Helaman feared lest by so doing, they should lose their souls; therefore all those which had entered into this covenant, were compelled to behold their brethren wade through their afflictions, in their dangerous circumstances, at this time. But behold, it came to pass they had many sons, which had not entered into a covenant that they would not take their weapons of war to defend themselves against their enemies; therefore they did assemble themselves together at this time, as many as were able to take up arms; and they called themselves Nephites; and they entered into a covenant, to fight for the liberty of the Nephites; yea, to protect the land unto the laying down of their lives; yea, even they covenanted that they never would give up their liberty, but they would fight in all cases to protect the Nephites and themselves from bondage.

Now behold, there were two thousand of those young men which entered into this covenant, and took their weapons of war to defend their country. And now behold, as they never had hitherto been a disadvantage to the Nephites, they became now at this period of time also a great support; for they took their weapons of war, and they would that Helaman should be their leader. And they were all young men, and they were exceeding valiant for courage, and also for strength and activity; but behold, this was not all: they were men which were true at all times in whatsoever thing they were entrusted; yea, they were men of truth and soberness, for they had been taught to keep the commandments of God, and to walk uprightly before him.

And now it came to pass that Helaman did march at the head of his two thousand stripling soldiers, to the support of the people in the borders of the land on the south, by the

West Sea. And thus ended the twenty and eigth year of the reign of the Judges over the people of Nephi, &c.

CHAPTER XXV.

And now it came to pass in the twenty and ninth year of the Judges, that Ammoron sent unto Moroni, desiring that he would exchange prisoners. And it came to pass that Moroni felt to rejoice exceedingly at this request, for he desired the provisions which was imparted for the support of the Lamanite prisoners, for the support of his own people; and he also desired his own people for the strengthening of his army.—Now the Lamanites had taken many women and children; and there was not a woman nor a child among all the prisoners of Moroni, or the prisoners which Moroni had taken; therefore Moroni resolved upon a stratagem, to obtain as many prisoners of the Nephites from the Lamanites, as it were possible; therefore he wrote an epistle, and sent it by the servant of Ammoron, the same who had brought an epistle to Moroni. Now these are the words which he wrote unto Ammoron, saying: Behold, Ammoron, I have wrote unto you somewhat concerning this war which ye have waged against my people, or rather which thy brother hath waged against them, and which ye are still determined to carry on after his death. Behold, I would tell you something concerning the justice of God, and the sword of his Almighty wrath, which doth hang over you: Except ye repent and withdraw your armies into your own lands, or the lands of your possessions, which is the land of Nephi; yea, I would tell you these things, if ye were capable of hearkening unto them; yea, I would tell you concerning that awful hell that awaits to receive such murderers as thou and thy brother hath been, except ye repent and withdraw your murderous purposes, and return with your armies to your own lands; but as ye have rejected these things, and have fought against the people of the Lord, even so I may expect you will do it again.

And now behold, we are prepared to receive you; yea, and except you withdraw your purposes, behold, ye will pull down the wrath of that God whom you have rejected, upon you, even to your utter destruction; but as the Lord liveth, our armies shall come upon you, except ye withdraw, and ye shall